

OUR SOUTHERN SISTER.

SOMETHING ABOUT WHAT MEXICO EATS AND DRINKS.

An Interesting Article by Captain John G. Bourke, of the Third Cavalry, on Folk Foods of the Rio Grande Valley.

Captain John G. Bourke, of the Third Cavalry, U. S. A., has recently written an exhaustive and interesting article on the "Folk Foods of the Rio Grande Valley," which is published in the current Journal of American Folk Lore. Captain Bourke has made a careful and discriminating study of his subject and he has brought to light a great many facts which are not generally known. In fact, very little is known of this subject at all, the usual treatises on life and customs in Mexico being strangely deficient in information regarding the natural food material within reach of the Mexicans and the various ways in which nature is improved upon.

The pino and pecan, says Captain Bourke, although indigenous to Mexico, are now cultivated foods; the pecan is an especial favorite and a toothsome caramel is made of it. The chirimoya is a large dark-green fruit about as big as a Duchesse pear, with a pith of the consistency of custard, which tastes like a mixture of pineapples, strawberries and raspberries. The tuna or nopal grows wild and is also cultivated. The cultivated variety bears a yellow fruit, which is eaten raw, dried, baked, or boiled down into a stiff marmalade, which is sold under the name of tuna cheese. The large plate-shaped leaf is grated and added to soups. The leaf, after being peeled of its thorny coat, is used as an embrocation in rheumatism.

Bananas grow wild in many parts of Mexico. Mangoes, something like our own canteloupe, are very plentiful.

Chile is a peculiar seed, not unlike linseed, which is stirred into water and when drunk forms a natural febrifuge.

Chile was the condiment in use among the Aztecs and to-day no Mexican dish is complete without it, this condiment being even more extensively used than garlic or tomatoes.

The coyotillo is a small bush, the sweet black berry of which is an agreeable food, but the little seeds, if swallowed, produce paralysis of the lower limbs. This is due to the fact that like the kernels of the peach, plum, almond and nectarine, the seeds contain a proportion of the deadly hydrocyanic acid. The hind extremities of goats, sheep and pigs which have fed upon this plant have been paralyzed as the result of swallowing the seeds.

The alicia is a species of cactus growing close to the ground and greatly resembles the biznaga or Turk's head. It yields a fruit much like a small plum, green in color and filled with fine seeds; the skin is quite thin. This is regarded as the most delicious of wild fruits. It rivals the strawberry or raspberry in delicacy of flavor. It seems to be equally good whether served raw, stewed, in pies and puddings or in ice cream; it makes an acceptable addition to juleps and lemonades.

The coma is a small black or deep blue berry, much like our own whortleberry, dead sweet in taste and growing on a stunted bush.

The Mexicans proper do not use the sunflower as an article of diet, but this plant is an important part of the larder of the Indian tribes both in Mexico and this country. The seeds are mixed with corn and ground into a meal, from which highly nutritious cakes are made.

The chapote is the Mexican persimmon; the tree is small with a smooth, white bark; the fruit is dead sweet to the taste, is the size of a cherry and black and pulpy. Mame looks like a Nellis pear; it has a smooth russet skin and an insipid pulp of firm creamy red matter, tasting much like a boiled sweet potato.

The "Spanish bayonet" is a fruit shaped like a banana, with a sweet, thick skin filled with a mushy pulp. The young central shoot is baked in live coals and from it is also made a peculiarly fiery quality of mescal.

The pulp of the aguacate or alligator pear is beaten up with egg, oil, vinegar and spices and makes a delicious salad; it is also very good sliced.

The "black ebony" beans when in the milk are boiled with milk, pepper and salt; when the beans become hard and black a coffee is made of them.

The Mexicans make some use also of acorns, but not to any very great extent; they also use the nut of the anacahuita, a variety of the dogwood.

The frijole or Mexican bean of both red and black varieties is the most toothsome of all the pulse, and is cooked in many ways by the Mexicans; stewed or boiled to a pulpy state it well deserves, from the fact that it appears at almost every meal, its name of "el plato nacional," or national dish.

The mescal has been highly prized as an article of food for centuries in Mexico. From the cooked leaves, when bruised and allowed to ferment, there is distilled a fiery liquor of extensive intoxicating properties. The stalk and leaves are made into food, as are also the grated roots of the plant. Of the central shoot the Apache Indians made their lances; the leaves made a thatch; the short thorn at the end of the leaf, with the attached filament, was a fairly good substitute for needle and thread, and of the central shoot daddies were made.

The tomato in a wild state is not much bigger than a cherry, but it enters very largely into the dishes of the people.

The biznaga, biznaga, or Turk's head cactus, is cut into slender strips and boiled in syrup, forming a candy which is highly prized.

The mesquite has been an article of food in Mexico for 400 years; the form of the leaf of bread made from it is the same to-day among the Apaches as when the Spaniard, Alarcon, ascended the Colorado river in 1541.

The sauco or elderberry, and the tejocote or bud of the wild rose, are both eaten by the Mexicans; the grape, of course, is extensively cultivated, and is very abundant in the wild state.

The fruit of the pitahaya is a ruby red pulp which is very highly prized by the Mexicans.

Corn is, of course, an article of food; corn meal mixed with coarse brown sugar is a staple article of food.

Strawberries grow wild in the mountains; plums are plentiful, and cocoanuts grow to a limited extent. Sclamas look like a rutabaga, and after being skinned they can be eaten raw, but must be followed by a drink of mescal to ward off chills and fever.

The foregoing comprise the principal natural articles of diet which nature has provided for the Mexicans. But these inventive people are fond of trying to improve upon nature, or at least making the best of what she does for them. They are very fond of cakes and confections. Char-amusca, a sort of gingerbread; narcosmusa, or ten bust; puches or doughnuts, are the principal cakes of the smaller kind. The Mexicans are great for drinking lemonades and other kinds of "ades" too numerous to mention. The inevitable pulque, smelling much like half-turned buttermilk, is sold on the corners for a penny a glass, and is cooling, palatable and nutritious. Then there is the pink cider of the tuna; variations of "ades" in which pineapples, oranges, limes, pomegranates and other fruits are used. Fresh milk is sometimes, but rarely, offered for sale. The Mexicans have of late developed quite a liking for beer, though the American trade is not of large dimensions as yet. In the extravagant use of these "ades" the Mexicans betray the Moorish strain in their blood; or-chatas made of seeds of the melon are in great favor.

If the drinker wants something more fiery than these cooling beverages, he goes to one of the little establishments where the pulque itself is sold, or the fiery and alcoholic mescal; the walls will be adorned with pious pictures, the while, the idea being that the sight of holy pictures will distract the liquor-inflamed mind from thoughts of strife and blood. Very little American whisky is found, and then of the poorest quality, and heavily adulterated.

Rice stewed in milk is a dish of which the Mexicans never tire; sausages are also much in favor, and chile con carne, or meat with pepper, is a savory stew which is a great favorite and universally eaten. Enchiladas or corn fritters; tamales or croquettes of beef, or chicken boiled in corn husks; tortillas or corn cakes; boiled squash; eggs fried on both sides and served with chile sauce; frijoles or beans are among the most frequently seen dishes on the Mexican table.

Half Fare Homeseekers' Excursion.

On May 21 and June 11 the Union Pacific system will sell tickets from Kansas City, Leavenworth and stations in Kansas and Nebraska to points south and west in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and Idaho, east of Weiser, and south of Beaver Canon, at rate of one first-class fare for the round trip. Minimum rate, \$7.00. Tickets good twenty days. See your nearest Union Pacific ticket agent. Best time and train service to Denver. Ticket offices, Kansas City, 1000 Main street, 1008 Union avenue and Union station. Telephone, 1103.

J. B. FRAWLEY, General Agent.

GOING TO CHICAGO TO-NIGHT?

The Burlington fast train "Elm" leaves at 6:50. The only line serving meals on the safe plan between Kansas City and Chicago, in addition to regular meal service. This entire train is equipped with all modern improvements. Service unexcelled.

HIGH BALLOON ASCENTS.

What Daring Aeronauts Have Encountered in Their Perilous Trips into the Clouds.

In a recent paper before the Boston Scientific Society, Mr. A. Lawrence Rotch, proprietor of the Blue Hill observatory in Milton, presented a brief statement of the more notable balloon ascents, speaking more particularly with reference to their results in meteorological information.

"Twice during the past thirty-six years," said Mr. Rotch, "man has reached the height of about 23,000 feet in balloons; he has climbed in the Himalayas to the altitude of about 24,000 feet and in each case has observed the temperature and pressure during the few minutes he remained at these altitudes. Quite recently instruments to record automatically these and other elements have been placed on the summit of El Misti, a volcano in Peru over 19,000 feet high, from which it is hoped to obtain fairly continuous records."

"Latterly, also, other attempts in France and Germany have been made to gain information as to the temperature of still higher strata by liberating small balloons carrying no aeronauts, but only self-recording barometers and thermometers. From the troughs of the former instruments, recovered when the balloon lost its buoyancy and fell to the ground, it was found that a height of about ten miles had been reached in two of the cases."

"Owing to defective instruments and exposure," continues Mr. Rotch, "balloon ascents, until recently, were productive of little good to meteorology. Among the most famous ascents of this century was that of Gay Lussac, who, in 1804, reached 23,000 feet, that of Barral and Bixie, in 1850, and of Welsh in 1852, who both attained nearly the same altitude."

"In 1862 the English aeronauts, Coxwell and Gishler, became unconscious at 23,000 feet and in 1875 the height was nearly equaled by the French aeronauts, Croce-Spinelli, Sivel and Tissandier, when the two former were asphyxiated, although a supply of oxygen was carried to assist respiration. This fatal ascent served to check further ascents until last year."

"Captive balloons were, however, employed considerably both in France and England and the temperature decrease investigated up to heights of 1,000 feet. Such balloons cannot be used in high winds, since they are driven down to the ground. For this and other reasons they are inferior to the tower which now exists in Paris."

"Dr. Berson last year ascended alone to perhaps the highest point ever reached by man; certainly his barometer reading of 9.1 inches, corresponding to an elevation of approximately 30,000 feet, is the lowest ever made. At this height of nearly six miles the aspirated thermometer read 54 deg. below zero, Fahrenheit, and one exposed to the sun's rays only 11 deg. below zero. Dr. Berson inhaled oxygen at times and suffered little from this extraordinary ascent."

QUARRYING WITH FINE CHISELS.

Thirty Pounds of Stone Broken Up by One Pound of Wood.

At Bangalore, in Southern India, the quarrying of granite slabs by means of wood fire has been brought to such perfection that an account of the method is interesting. The rock forms solid masses uninterrupted by cracks for several hundreds of feet, and when quarried over an area is treated as follows: A narrow line of wood fire, perhaps seven feet long, is gradually elongated, and at the same time moved forward over the tolerably even surface of solid rock. The line of the general splitting of the rock, light wood, which have been left burning in their position until strokes with a hammer indicate that the rock in front of the fire has become detached from the main mass underneath. The burning wood is then pushed forward a few inches and left until the hammer again indicates that the slit has extended. Thus the fire is moved on, and at the same time the length of the line of fire is increased and made to be convex on the side of the fresh rock, the maximum length of the arc amounting to about twenty-five feet. It is only on this advancing line of fire that any heating takes place, the portion which has been traversed being left to itself. This latter portion is covered with the ashes left by the wood, and with thin splinters which have been burst off. These splinters are only of about one-eighth of an inch in thickness and a few inches across. They are quite independent of the general splitting of the rock, which is all the time going on at a depth of about five inches from the surface.

The burning lasts eight hours, and the line of fire advances at the average rate of nearly six feet an hour. The area actually passed over by the line of fire is 400 square feet, but as the crack extends about three feet on either side beyond the fire, the area of the entire slab which is set free measures about 740 square feet. All this is done with may be about fifteen hundredweight of wood. Taking the average thickness of the stone at five inches, and its specific gravity at 2.63, the result is thirty pounds of stone quarried with one pound of wood.—Nature.

NEW PASSENGER SERVICE.

From Kansas City Via the Burlington Route.

"DENVER SPECIAL" leaves Kansas City daily 10:50 a. m., solid train; arrives Denver, 7:30 a. m.

"BURLINGTON NEW LINE VIA BIL-LINGS," for Puget Sound and Pacific Coast from Kansas City, leaves at 10:50 a. m. daily.

This line gives patrons an opportunity to visit Hot Springs, South Dakota, Black Hills and Yellowstone Park, and it is the short line between Kansas City and Helena by 385 miles, Butte 315 miles, Spokane 471 miles, Seattle 140 miles and Tacoma 145 miles.

This is the most marvelous scenic route and perhaps the most interesting across the continent.

Round trip tickets to all Pacific coast points via this line.

For full information address H. C. Orr, Burlington Route, Kansas City, Mo.

Cheap Excursions Via the Santa Fe Route.

For the meeting of the conclave Knights Templar and grand chapter Order Eastern Star, the SANTA FE ROUTE will sell tickets to WICHITA at one fare for the round trip, on May 12, 13 and 14, good to return until May 18.

For the grand lodge Knights of Pythias and brigade of Uniform Rank, tickets will be sold to HUTCHINSON at one fare for the round trip, on May 19 to 22, inclusive, good to return until May 25.

For the annual meeting of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, tickets will be sold to WICHITA at one fare for the round trip, on May 22, 23 and 24, good to return until May 27.

On May 21, HOMESEKERS' EXCURSION tickets will be sold to all points in Kansas, Oklahoma, Indian Territory, Texas, Colorado, Utah and New Mexico at one fare for the round trip, tickets limited twenty days for return, and stop-overs allowed at pleasure, except south of La Junta. No ticket will be sold for less than \$2.00.

SANTA FE ROUTE ticket offices, northeast corner Tenth and Main streets, 1650 Union avenue and Union depot.

GEORGE W. HAGENBUCH, Passenger and Ticket Agent.

Luxury on Wheels.

There is only one line running three limited trains daily between Kansas City and St. Louis, connecting in the magnificent new Union station for all Eastern points. Everybody knows this means the MISSOURI PACIFIC. The flyers leave Union depot every day in the year as follows: St. Louis limited day express, 10 a. m.; "New York Fast Mail," 1 p. m., and St. Louis night express, 9 p. m.

When you go East, take the Missouri Pacific and enjoy the "best in the land" without paying anything extra for the superior service.

New Sleepers on the Alton.

Beginning with April 1st, the Chicago & Alton railroad will run two sleepers daily in their "St. Louis Limited" between Kansas City and St. Louis. The two new sleeping cars assigned to this service are named the "Majestic" and "Tentonic," after the two new White Star line Atlantic ocean steamers. Each year brings something new in the carbuilder's art and with each improvement we exclaim that surely nothing more can be added. Viewing the new Alton sleepers, with their large, roomy compartments, drawing rooms, and perfectly appointed toilet rooms, one would imagine the builder possessed the lamp of Aladdin.

Three Flyers.

All the luxuries known to modern travel can be secured by taking either of the following trains, which leave Union depot every day in the year: St. Louis limited day express, 10 a. m.; "New York Fast Mail," 1 p. m.; and St. Louis limited night express, 9 p. m. The "New York Fast Mail" is a new train, and is a time saver, making direct connections at St. Louis in the finest union station in the world for all Eastern points. Remember, there are no additional charges for the superior service afforded only by the MISSOURI PACIFIC railway.

GOING TO ST. LOUIS TO-NIGHT?

Burlington Route train leaves at 8:15 p. m. The only line running three sleepers with new elegant compartment berths and buffet. Service unsurpassed.